

Frequently Asked Questions About the 2000 Proposed Budget

How much is the 2000 King County Proposed Budget?

In 2000 the King County Budget will total more than \$2.6 billion. Of this amount, \$450 million (including \$5 million in CX Transfers to CIP) is contained in the Current Expense Fund. The Current Expense Fund is the County's General Fund that pays for direct services including jails, police, parks, human services, and administrative departments. \$1.4 billion is dedicated for the non-CX departments including transit, roads, solid waste, wastewater treatment, water and land resources, public health, airport, stadium and a variety of internal service funds. \$766 million is committed to capital improvements for roads, parks, and other major public facilities.

Is there anything new in this budget?

As the population grows in King County, growing demands challenge the criminal justice system. New laws require enforcement, prosecution, and public defense resources. Increased sanctions for criminal behavior place additional demands on courts, jails and rehabilitation programs. King County will continue to focus on ensuring public safety while pursuing long-range planning to ensure criminal justice services are not only efficient, but also effective in reducing criminal behavior in our communities.

The Department of Adult Detention will focus on managing the growing prisoner population and overtime expenditures. While the 1999 average daily population (ADP) is lower than projected, the proposed ADP for 2000 assumes that the growth rate will increase but remain lower than the historical average over the last 15 years. Although this population is less than what was projected for 1999, the department is faced with the dual dilemma of housing inmates while simultaneously managing a major King County Correctional Facility (KCCF) remodel. This remodel will displace a total of 352 inmates to the detention facility in the Regional Justice Center (RJC). The department will also open up the Office of Jail Planning that will examine new capacity over the next six years in conjunction with the operational master planning process.

In 2000, District Court will provide services to seventeen cities under a newly negotiated contract for municipal court services. The new contract creates the foundation for a long-term, cooperative relationship with all contracting cities. In addition, the 2000 Proposed Budget adds resources to improve the courts' efforts to ensure public safety by enforcing offender accountability through its probation compliance program, updating court records on a more timely basis, and improving the tracking of warrants and no contact orders.

The Department of Judicial Administration (DJA) plays an important leadership role in the County's law, safety, and justice system by maintaining records, providing access to case files, compiling and reporting statistics, scheduling cases, managing special programs and grants, and accounting for fee and court fine revenue collection. DJA continues to expand its technological "connectivity" in order to provide expedient access to legal documents and scheduling information. With a fully operational system, attorneys will be able to file court papers electronically from remote locations, Judicial Administration will require less space to store Court records, and the courts' clientele will be able to access court files in a more timely fashion.

Funding is included in the Proposed Budget to implement increases in Public Defense for Non-Legal Support Staff and for Assigned Counsel. The intent is to supply a comparable rate increase in an effort to retain staff and to recruit and hire replacement staff. This funding is the first increment of a four to five-year phase.

In the Proposed Budget of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, funding is included to add victim advocates for the Victim Assistance and Domestic Violence Units. The Civil Division has also experienced workload increases. In particular, the County has been the subject of an increasing number of natural resources and labor-related lawsuits over the past few years. The 2000 Proposed Budget adds three new natural resources-related positions to address water, wastewater, and parks related issues; and an employment specialist in the transit section to improve the office's ability to respond to lawsuits on behalf of the County. In addition, the budget includes two positions to provide support to Becca Bill truancy and employment related issues.

The 2000 Proposed Budget supports the contracting efforts of the Sheriff's Office. In 1999, the Sheriff's Office began contracting partnerships with the cities of Carnation, Newcastle and Sammamish, bringing to thirteen the number of cities King County provides police services to on a contract basis. In addition, the budget contains a marked increase in the number of officers serving the Metro-Transit Division. Finally, the Sound Transit System has selected the King County Sheriff's Office as the primary provider of security services to its tri-county service area.

In addition, three significant upgrades to the Sheriff's Office facilities are planned. First, the King County Regional Communications and Emergency Coordination Center will be built which will be a 24-hour emergency call-taking and dispatch center for police response, as well as serve as the planning/coordination hub for emergency operations during a disaster. It will be built specifically to withstand a major earthquake or other natural disaster. Second, the Evidence Storage Unit will be moving from their cramped, inadequate, and inefficient space in the Courthouse to a building that will provide significant improvements in the holding and tracking of evidence. Third, the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) will consolidate their dispersed offices and workspaces into the fully remodeled space vacated by Evidence Storage.

Funding is included for Superior Court to increase judicial resources through implementing the recommendations of the Interbranch Protocol Committee. These recommendations create the fiftieth Superior Court judgeship in response to an increasing criminal caseload. In addition, a number of initiatives in the 2000 Proposed Budget are geared toward resolving equity or fairness issues in terms of providing comparable pay for Superior Court staff and establishing permanent full-time equivalent positions for ongoing temporary employees.

The 2000 Proposed Budget for the Department of Youth Services (DYS) reflects the development of proactive strategies to manage an increasing number of juvenile offenders, primarily due to a growing population of at-risk youth in the region. Anticipated increases in detention population will be handled within existing resources through increased use of secure detention alternatives for detained youth who can safely be placed in less structured programs instead of maximum secure detention. The increased use of alternatives to detention can be accomplished in conjunction with the cooperation of the Superior Court judiciary.

Workload in Court Services, which provides community supervision for adjudicated offenders, has increased as a result of recent legislative changes. These legislative changes increase the length of time youth can be sentenced to community supervision. In addition, State funding for certain programs (Becca Bill, Option B sentencing, and the Early Intervention and Accountability Program) has been drastically reduced or eliminated. DYS will restructure juvenile probation counselor caseloads to manage the increased workload and will mitigate some of the increases by reducing the intensity of community supervision for certain low-risk misdemeanor offenders. This budget provides resources to assist DYS in mitigating the effects of the State's grant reductions.

In recognition of the importance of quality child care, and as a way to improve its availability in the community, the Metropolitan King County Council passed a childcare wage ordinance in 1999 that seeks to increase the professionalism and retention of childcare workers through a wage incentive pilot program. The Executive Proposed Budget includes funding to start this pilot project beginning in 2000 and continuing through 2004. Participating vendors who meet the ordinance requirements and other program criteria, are eligible for a professionalism and retention subsidy of up to one-dollar/hour per employee. The purpose of this pilot project is to assess the effect of increasing salary and benefit levels on the quality of childcare in King County.

Another initiative in the budget is responding to the Endangered Species Act. As a result of the federal listing of the Chinook Salmon, King County will spend approximately \$10.5 million in 2000 to increase regional coordination among King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties. This money will be used to educate the public, to perform scientific review and analysis on habitat, and to increase code enforcement and inspection. King County's ESA Policy Office has sent a response to the National Marine Fisheries Service titled "The Return of the King." It currently is finalizing negotiations with NFMS and the US Department of Fish and Wildlife Service on a 4(d) rule, which will govern environmental and development activities in King County and the Tri-County area.

Two Transit Oriented Develop (TOD) pilot projects were initiated in 1999. The lots are located at the Northgate Transit Center and the Renton Transit Center. Work in 2000 related to these projects includes completing negotiations for the Renton project, beginning construction of a bus layover associated with Northgate TOD project, completing analysis of parking capacity requirements, and finalizing agreements with the City of Seattle for the sale of the 5th Avenue Park and Ride lot. Consideration is currently being given to create a TOD revolving fund that would collect revenue generated through TOD efforts. These funds would be used in support of TOD projects and could be used to offset costs of projects that would not otherwise be a net benefit to the Public Transportation Fund (PTF).

The 2000 Parks CIP continues the significant focus initiated in 1998 on increasing the athletic recreational opportunities available to King County residents. Within the 2000 CIP, over \$6.2 million in new bond funding is allocated to ballfield projects. New development or rehabilitation is planned for several sites, including Marymoor, Fort Dent, Highline, Ravensdale, and Tahoma.

As required by the Growth Management Act, King County will undertake a major revision to its comprehensive plan for the first time since the plan's adoption in 1994. The goal for the revisions in 2000 is to make sure the plan removes barriers to making growth management work in King County: improves usability of the plan, eliminates inconsistencies, and improves public

understanding on growth management issues. The plan will also address several critical issues, including King County's changing role as a regional government with significant responsibilities as a local service provider; the need to effectively integrate land use and transportation planning; and the protection of Chinook Salmon in accordance with the Endangered Species Act.

As with the operating program, integrating Sound Transit services will have an impact on the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). For the 2000 CIP, the following impacts have been estimated:

- additional fleet to maintain schedules while operating on surface streets during and after tunnel closure;
- reimbursement for one-time capital costs;
- acquisition of 20 additional articulated coaches to offset the dual-powered coaches being dedicated to Sound Transit (ST) service;
- expansion of base capacity sufficient to accommodate ST fleet (reimbursement is still under negotiation); and
- payment for the purchase of the tunnel beginning in September of 2004, more than offsetting the current tunnel related debt service.

During 1999, the policies for the Paratransit Program were revised. These revisions, coupled with a proposed fare increase scheduled for February 2000, result in reduced demand for paratransit services. The reduced demand translates into the need for fewer paratransit vehicles and Mobile Data Terminals. As another means to reducing reliance on paratransit service, the paratransit program has a goal of increasing the number of accessible taxicabs to 10 percent of the taxi fleet. A new proposed project would purchase a total of 75 vehicles to assign to taxi providers who agree to charge the same fare for people with disabilities as without.

With the implementation of the Adopted 6-Year Plan, Transit experienced growth in its commuter markets that increased the use of existing Park and Ride facilities and created pressure to expand those facilities. A program to construct as many as 5,000 new parking stalls, costing a total of \$83 million, was initiated in 1998. Since the original proposal was introduced, a number of changes have occurred in the program. These changes include alternative siting as Sound Transit locations are finalized, delayed implementation, accelerated implementation, and changes in scope. For example, the original proposal included funds to expand capacity at the existing Federal Way Park and Ride lot. In working with the City of Federal Way, the State DOT and Sound Transit, it has now been determined that expansion at the existing lot is not the best solution for the area. As a result, the 2000 CIP includes the Federal Way Park and Ride lot as a new lot located in the vicinity of 272nd Street and Pacific Highway South.

Future lot expansion is projected in the most heavily used commuter corridors, South I-5, I-405 North and East I-90. The current financial plan includes grant and local funding for these projects. The use of long-term debt is not assumed to finance these projects.

Are there any major tax or fee increases in this budget?

The Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) proposed a fee restructuring for 1999. The 1999 Adopted Budget called for “automatic” DDES fee increases of 5% in 2000 and 5% in 2001.

The Surface Water Management Section of the Water and Land Resources Division in the Department of Natural Resources will propose a service area expansion for its Surface Water Management fee, effectively encompassing the balance of unincorporated King County, east of the current Urban Growth Boundary. The added service area will generate an additional \$3.1 million in SWM fees; it assumes the same fee structure and rates that are currently in place. This program will provide SWM services to residents, businesses and landowners in unincorporated King County outside the existing SWM service area

SWM will utilize the fees from the expanded service area to:

- replace \$235,000 of River Improvement Funds (RIF) currently budgeted in the RIF and use the \$235,000 “saved” to leverage \$500,000 in federal and state grant dollars;
- replace \$113,000 of CX budgeted in Resource Lands and Open Space (RLOS) and a small amount in the existing SWM program; and
- the remaining funds will be used to enhance existing programs to allow service provision in the expanded service area.

The 2000 Proposed Budget includes various fee increases collected by the Department of Public Health. A few of the fees are adopted by the King County Council, while others are adopted by the Board of Health. Those adopted by the County Council will have a total impact of \$35,000 and relate to water and sewage regulations.

There are miscellaneous other fees and fee related revenue enhancements included in the 2000 Proposed Budget. The major ones are listed below:

- \$219,000 from new and increased user fees from the Department of Judicial Administration and District Court;
- \$116,000 from new community supervision fees collected through the Department of Youth Services;
- \$60,000 from an increase in the pet adoption fee administered by Licensing and Regulatory Services; and
- \$46,000 from treatment fees collected by the Department of Community and Human Services.

How many people work for King County?

For 2000, King County government will employ 13,523 FTEs, an addition of 307 FTEs from 1999 levels. Most of these adds are associated with expansion of transit services, increases in criminal justice agencies such as the Sheriff's Office, and increases in the departments of Natural Resources and Developmental and Environmental Services.

How will a person in unincorporated King County be affected by this budget?

This budget will improve police services in unincorporated King County by adding six traffic officers and one sergeant. The sergeant and officers will be devoted exclusively to traffic and

DUI functions to improve road safety and to reduce alcohol-related accidents and fatalities. The addition of the officers will enable the Sheriff's Office to more effectively address citizen complaints about road use violations, particularly speeding complaints. It will also enhance the Sheriff's Office ability to enforce new State DUI laws.

The public transportation program is an integral part of the Executive initiatives for Smart Growth and the Regional Arterial Network. The proposed CIP has a number of projects that support these initiatives, including:

- The Speed and Reliability Program which includes projects throughout the County that endeavor to both reduce the travel time and variance in travel time of transit coaches and works with jurisdictions to make "transit-friendly" improvements to roadways;
- The Transit Oriented Development Project which is looking for ways to partner with developers to leverage County investments to increase housing or commercial establishments around transit facilities;
- The Passenger Facility Program which includes expansion of the Park and Ride system in those areas where transit ridership has grown beyond the facilities currently available, and transit hubs and transfer points which are designed to provide individuals with a convenient way to move between neighborhood bus service and service outside of the community;
- The Transportation Concurrency Management program is a key tool used by the County to ensure that transportation improvements are consistent with the goals established in the Comprehensive Plan. Applications for development permits must obtain a certificate of transportation concurrency (or capacity availability) prior to applying for a building permit. The certificate confirms and establishes the availability of transportation facilities to serve the development and commits the capacity to the development. A transportation concurrency certificate is not issued if the development causes a violation of transportation level of service and there is no financial commitment in place to complete the improvements within six years.

The Comprehensive Plan also distinguishes between building new capacity projects for existing and pipeline development (vested in permitting), and those projects needed to serve only new growth. The Transportation Service strategy in the Plan prioritizes existing and pipeline needs before new growth needs.

The development of the 2000-2005 Capital Improvement Program has evaluated projects for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and for meeting concurrency. Adjustments to project priorities, scopes, phasing, and costs, as well as new projects, have been incorporated.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will engage in scientific research and analysis as part of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) response. The focus will be on gathering and inventorying the factors affecting salmon habitat by Water Resource Inventory Area, including the Snoqualmie basin. It will also embark on an analysis to construct a Habitat Conservation Plan framework. Information gathered will establish a base line for fish habitat, including riverine, estuarine and marine habitat. Specialized technical work groups will focus on water quality, forestry practices and drainage regulations.

Open space and natural areas will be preserved as part of the Transfer of Development Credits program. In 1999, the Executive proposed a "bank," funded at a level of \$1.5 million, that will "purchase" development credits from sending sites and "resell" them to receiving sites. An

additional \$250,000 in Transit and \$250,000 in Roads funds is included to offer certain amenities, such as pedestrian facilities, bike lanes and bus shelters, to urban areas for “receiving” density credits. The ordinance spelling out the policies and procedures for the operation of the TDC Bank was sent to the Council in September 1999.

What impact will the budget have on Health and Human Services?

The 2000 Proposed Budget for Health & Human Services reflects both the challenges and opportunities confronting the County. Programs that are primarily funded by Current Expense dollars are feeling the effects of slower growth in revenues and rising criminal justice costs. On the other hand, 2000 represents an opportunity for programs that receive money from other funding sources to refine and expand their programs to better meet the needs of King County’s most vulnerable residents.

For example, the 2000 Budget features a number of initiatives to improve access to affordable housing for the less fortunate. It provides additional one-time funds to the Housing Opportunity Fund, which develops housing for low-income residents. It also adds funds to ascertain the number of homeless veterans in King County, to develop additional housing for people with developmental disabilities, and to develop housing options for people with chronic substance abuse problems.